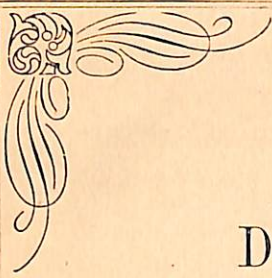


1850



A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

ANCIENT AND HONORABLE ARTILLERY COMPANY,

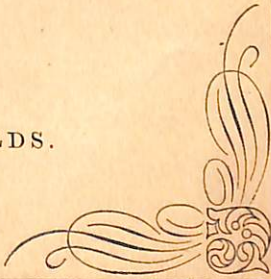
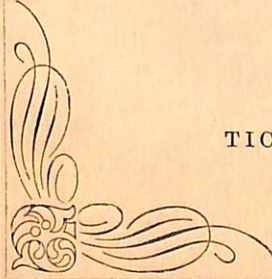
ON THEIR

CCXII ANNIVERSARY.

BY REV. JOHN WOART, A. M.,

Rector of Christ Church, Boston.

BOSTON:
TICKNOR, REED & FIELDS.
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WILLIAM A. HALL, PRINTER,
22 School Street, Boston.

Boston, June 18, 1850.

DEAR SIR,

The undersigned, in behalf of the ANCIENT AND HONORABLE ARTILLERY COMPANY, and in accordance with a vote of said Company, respectfully request for publication, a copy of your learned and eloquent discourse, delivered on their Two Hundred and Twelfth Anniversary.

We have the honor to be,

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servants,

JOSEPH ANDREWS,

WILLIAM SCHOULER,

ROBERT COWDIN,

Commissioned Officers for the past year.

Rev. JOHN WOART.

Boston, June 22, 1850.

GENTLEMEN,

I felt highly complimented at being invited to preach before the ANCIENT AND HONORABLE ARTILLERY COMPANY. I am gratified to know that my discourse met the approbation of the members. I comply with the request for its publication, with much diffidence. I commend it to His blessing, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being," with the earnest desire that the truth may be deeply felt, throughout our country, that "righteousness exalteth a nation."

With great respect,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN WOART.

Col. JOSEPH ANDREWS.

Col. WILLIAM SCHOULER.

Maj. ROBERT COWDIN.

Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company.

OFFICERS FOR 1850-51.

Commander—Col. ISAAC HULL WRIGHT.

First Lieutenant—Maj. GEORGE M. THACHER.

Second Lieutenant—Maj. JOHN C. PARK.

Adjutant—Maj. ABRAHAM EDWARDS.

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2d Capt. WILLIAM B. BULLOCK.

3d Lieut. DAVID PULSIFER.

4th Capt. CHARLES S. LAMBERT.

5th Mr. GEORGE B. WELLMAN.

6th Mr. EDWARD STEARNS.

Treasurer—Col. EDWARD F. HALL.

Clerk—Lieut. THACHER BEAL.

Armorer—Lieut. JOHN G. ROBERTS.

DISCOURSE.

St. Luke, iii. 14.

AND THE SOLDIERS LIKEWISE DEMANDED OF HIM, SAYING, AND WHAT SHALL WE DO? AND HE SAID UNTO THEM, DO VIOLENCE TO NO MAN, NEITHER ACCUSE ANY FALSELY; AND BE CONTENT WITH YOUR WAGES.

JOHN was sent into the world as a forerunner of our blessed Lord. He attracted much attention when he began to speak boldly, and to reprove and instruct people who had departed from the way of holiness. St. Luke tells us that a portion of John's hearers were at one time greatly offended, as he was addressing them, and were unwilling to become his disciples.¹ They hated reproof, and turned away to die in their sins.² Others who were present listened with attention, and, at length, expressed an interest in his mission, and began to question him with regard to their duty in reference to the coming of Christ.

We are not sure that there was entire sincerity on the part of these persons. It was not unfre-

¹ Luke vii. 30.

² Prov. xv. 10.

quently the case, in the course of John's ministry, and in that also of Christ himself, that hearers, whose position forbade their presuming to manifest open resentment, taunted, and jeered, and proposed idle questions, that, if possible, under the cover of apparent honesty, they might bring the messenger, and his mission, into marked contempt.

John, as well as our Saviour, may oftentimes have understood this, and yet have replied, in humility and faithfulness; and have given instruction which was suited, years afterwards, to enlighten and advance in righteousness, many of the same class, by whom it may, at first, have been rejected.

The cavilings of infidelity and indifference have, more than once, in the Church's history, called forth the sanctified ability of some pious believer, whose zealous efforts have overthrown many a strong-hold of sin, and caused many straying feet to become firmly fixed upon the Rock of Ages.

The House of Prayer is not always resorted to by devout seekers after truth. But they who preach address the listener as if without a thought that this were probable, and persuasively win to Christian service hearts that were indeed far off from God. And succeeding generations are affected by a knowledge of the fact that not a few instances have occurred within the sanctuaries of religion, in which

"They who came to scoff,
Remained to pray."

Presuming these inquirers, however, to have been seriously seeking to derive instruction from the teachings of John—which seems most probably to have been the case—they at once appear before us as examples worthy to be had in lasting remembrance. John proclaimed himself to be a Prophet from on high. He spake freely of the sinfulness of man, and of the duty of his coming, in penitence and childlike simplicity, to be taught to know, and love, and serve God, aright, through Him who was soon to appear, according to prophecy, to restore and bless the world. Instead of "rejecting the counsel of God"¹ there seemed to be a conviction on the part of these hearers that they needed divine protection and guidance to enable them to fulfil the duties of their calling with acceptance. They, therefore, listened attentively to John. In so doing they humbled themselves, and honored God. Not to be willing to do this is to live "without God in the world;"² to "trust in one's own heart;"³ and to incur the danger of the entire withdrawal of divine countenance and support.

When Jesus came into the world, and preached, and sent out his ministers to teach the truth, "Some believed the things which were spoken, and some

¹ Luke vii. 30.

² Ephe. ii. 12.

³ Prov. xxviii. 26.

believed not.”¹ It is our part to commend those who have given an attentive ear to the gospel; and to refer, with thankfulness, to individuals and bodies of men who manifest the spirit which is possessed by those whom God is pleased to make “able ministers of the New Testament,”² that they are not sufficient of themselves to think anything, as of themselves, but that their sufficiency is of God.”³

The religion of Christ is not to be confined to places, or to be professed and practiced by any one particular set of people in the world. “All sorts and conditions of men” are to bow down together in the sacred edifice; the voice of prayer should be heard in our legislative halls; our courts of justice; our city and town assemblies; in our colleges, academies, and schools; in the establishments connected with our navy and army; and in institutions and associations of every sort which have in view the improvement and prosperity of mankind. “What shall we do?” is a question which should go up to heaven from the midst of all who wish to retain any claim to the name of Christian.

And amongst these different bodies the presence of Christ’s ministers should be welcomed, that the fullest opportunity may be afforded them to induce all to inquire of them, as the appointed expounders of God’s Word, “What shall we do?”—and to

¹ Acts xxviii. 24. xvii. 12, 32, 34. ² 2 Cor. iii. 6. ³ 2 Cor. iii. 5.

introduce and encourage such influences as serve to make man conscious of his own ignorance and weakness,—and of the strength which is imparted, through grace, to the penitent and believing.

Woe to them who exclude from their councils the instrumentalities which Heaven institutes, to teach us how to acquire and enjoy earthly blessings, so as to secure, in connection with them, the comfortable assurance of “an inheritance that fadeth not away.”¹

To the lasting discredit of persons who made such efforts, propositions were at one time introduced into Congress, to abolish the office of Chaplain. Of all the public officers in the country, who require more of Christian influence and instruction than the members of the Senate and House of our National Legislature? In addition to the reasons *always* existing for the humble asking of the question “What shall we do?” on the part of those who occupy these exalted stations, difficulties and differences are frequently arising which ought not to be left to be discussed and decided upon by men, on the part of whom God’s ministers, and God’s Holy Spirit, are not sought for and esteemed. We honor the rulers of our land for resisting such evil influences; and we rejoice that a disposition is increasing, rather than otherwise, in all parts of our country, to reverence the institutions of religion,

¹ 1 Peter, i. 4.

and cherish a grateful dependence upon the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

A striking evidence of this was given a few years since, in the feeling produced by the announcement that a rich man had bequeathed a sum of money to found a college for orphan children, in one of our large cities, the buildings and grounds of which no Christian minister was ever to be permitted to enter! And from which scriptural instruction was to be excluded! And we have still fuller proof of it in the conviction which pervades the public mind, that the permanent prosperity of that institution is extremely questionable.¹

I can the more freely give utterance to these sen-

¹ A distinguished citizen endeavored to persuade the city of Philadelphia "that there should be a respectful but determined rejection of the trust intended to be instituted by the will of Stephen Girard, Esq., for the maintaining and the educating of orphans. It is a great sacrifice; but it cannot be too great, when the acceptance of it would be an acknowledgement that religion in its simplest forms, is unnecessary to the binding of men to their various duties."

Mr. Girard gave as a reason for the restrictions, "the diversity of sentiment on subjects of religion." This writer says, "The will goes to the extent of the abandonment of religion, as prescribing the rules of human conduct."

The bequest was received in consequence of very liberal constructions of the will of Mr. Girard. The same person remarks, "It must be left to the consciences of the honorable bodies concerned, whether they believe in the correctness of the latitude adopted in the interpretation of it; (the will) and if they do not, whether they will take on themselves the awful responsibility of the rejection of religion, as the foundation of human duty."

timents, in this discourse, from the fact, that they whom I am privileged to address, have, for a long course of years, united together on their annual festival-day, to offer the sacrifice of prayer and praise in the House of God, and listen, with reverence, to learn their duty, as Christian men, in the profession which they represent.

The procession of this "Ancient and Honorable" company, and that also of our State legislators on the different days fixed for the yearly meeting of both, as they move through the streets of our city, towards time-honored sanctuaries of religion, are sights of deep interest to reflecting men; reminding them of the "first fruits" which God required in olden time for His altar sacrifice:¹ and of our blessed Saviour's counsel to his disciples, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God."²

People may talk of formality, and the mere following out of old observances. "Judge not, that ye be not judged."³ We will believe the faithful perpetuators of this pious custom to be devoutly sincere; and cherish the animating hope that every subsequent day of the year witnesses to an opening consecration of heart, and a closing acknowledgment of mercies, offered up, on the part of each and every one, to his Creator, Preserver, and bountiful Benefactor.

¹ Ex. xxiii. 19. Deut. xviii. 4. xxvi. 2. ² Matt. vi. 33. ³ Matt. vii. 1.

Good Arch-Bishop Leighton speaks of the encouraging approbation which should be given to the ministers of Christ when they are found faithful in their office; and he exhorts them, most earnestly, to aim at increasing soundness in doctrine, and excellence of life, inasmuch as they are looked upon as patterns and guides to Christian people, who are all expected, by their profession, to be well disciplined, and suitably qualified, for the right discharge of duty. This reference to those high in office amongst the soldiers of the cross, is suited to awaken in your minds, my distinguished hearers, a deeper sense of your responsibilities, representing, as you do, the officers of the principal militia of the Commonwealth; and uniting together to improve yourselves that you may be the better fitted to instruct others in whatever may serve to give character and efficiency to the defensive organizations of our country. Your influence has not been, neither can it ever become, small or unimportant. You have set the noble example of deference to the Word of God, and respect to the "ambassadors for Christ."¹ The carefully preserved volumes of sermons in your archives testify that you have freely given to the pulpit the privilege of speaking to present and future generations of men who are trained to arms. MAY SUCH BE YOUR CONTINUED PRACTICE! growing out of a

¹ 2 Cor. v. 20.

disposition similar to that which we suppose to have been manifested by the soldiers who were instructed by John the Baptist. And may every other company, and every military man, possess such acquirements, and maintain such a character, that the historian may be able to say of them, as we find it recorded of the founders of your "ancient" body, that "they were equally qualified to adorn the Church by their exemplary virtue, and defend it by their valor."

The soldiers who addressed John, in the text, were, most probably, Jews, either by birth or initiation. Had they been Gentiles, John would, doubtless, have considered it his duty to direct their attention at first to the true God, as they were an ignorant and idolatrous people, and afterwards teach them how to serve God acceptably. The chief portion of the soldiers in Judea may have been Romans, as that was then a province; and yet there is no reason to suppose that those belonging to Galilee were not principally Jews. Grotius, Josephus, and other writers tell us that generally the Jews did not object to military duties, and were sometimes found engaged in them for life.

If John had believed that all military pursuits would be thought objectionable under the New Testament dispensation, he would not have been back-

ward in expressing such a belief, and in suggesting to his hearers the importance of immediately turning their attention to some more useful and creditable calling: for he was, by no means, afraid, or unwilling to speak against any customs which were wrong, or which were to be done away with, or varied. And he would especially have done so in this case, as these soldiers¹ were, without doubt, about to engage in warfare. Herod was at that time at war with Aretus, a king of Arabia Petraea, and these men are said to have been a part of his army, on their way from Galilee, and were obliged to pass through the place where John was preaching. But we find John instructing them in the morals of their calling, and aiming to prepare them to be Christian soldiers, when, as followers of Jesus, it would be of the highest importance for them to sanctify their profession, and make it honorable, in its subservency to the pure principles of the gospel of a divine Redeemer. John evidently considered that good order, and good conduct, on the part of the soldiers, would be the bringing forth of "fruits worthy of repentance."²

There is scarcely a profession or calling, the good design and beneficial influence of which are not, at times, called in question by some portions of the

¹ στρατευόμενοι.

² Luke iii. 8.

community. That of the soldier does not, in these days especially, escape. With some there is a questioning as to the advisability of its existence; and this is expressed in a decided, yet, usually, unobjectionable manner. By others the most reproachful and severe attacks are made upon it, as a calling opposed to the spirit of true religion. The Lord's Day, the ministry, and even the sacred Scriptures, receive their share of opposition: and are reflected upon as unauthoritative; if not, indeed, as misleading influences in society. Let them all be met by renewed examinations on our part of the grounds upon which we rest; the motives which direct our movements; and by the prudent setting forth of the reasons which induce us to claim respect. And whilst we endeavor to live, as men, above all justifiable reproach, we should strive to make every thing connected with our professional principles and conduct worthy of general regard and esteem, that the advantages flowing forth from them to the world may not fail to be observed.

I cannot omit acknowledging, with gratitude, the obligations which are due from free and enlightened people to those who have borne arms in defence of human rights; and to all who are willing to be disciplined, and are ready to answer the call of duty to sustain the laws, and preserve our civil and religious

institutions from the open violence of reckless and unprincipled men. Military skill and power are among the means which God has been pleased to make instrumental in securing to nations the invaluable blessings of liberty, and domestic order, and good government. And until all men shall have been made submissive to the controlling influences of divine grace; having God's law written within their hearts, and delighting to see HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD,¹ inscribed upon all things around them, we must, necessarily expect that there may be occasions when the active energies of our protective forces must be called into exercise. At any rate, until that period arrive, we should be guilty in the sight of Heaven were we to leave the fair heritage with which the Almighty has favored us, to be intruded upon and despoiled, by people whom it seems almost impossible, under the strictest government, to keep within any due degree of subordination.

An important part of John's counsel to the soldiers was, that they should "do violence to no man." Men in authority are apt to be too little considerate of the rights of others; and, under cover of their station, they may be induced to encroach upon individuals, or neighboring States. This caution should be continually borne in mind. And it may not be improper to suggest, that it is not with-

¹ Zech. xiv. 20.

out its appropriateness in the councils of the chief men of a nation, to whom is given the general direction of the navy and army; and whose powers extend also to lesser matters, which, though they may be inferior in character, are, by no means, unimportant.

The literal meaning of the text is "terrify¹ no man." A strong man, or a strong nation, may terrify others into a compliance with unreasonable demands. This would be ungenerous. The soldier, and the government under which he serves, should nobly disdain such a course, and set the Christian example of forbearance, honesty, and upright dealing towards all; and especially towards the least informed and weaker portions of mankind.

This disposition to "terrify" persons, thereby to secure their aid for the furtherance of individual or corporate interests, exists too generally in society. It is an offspring of sinful human nature. The sacred ministry may suffer from it. Men of every pursuit may be troubled and perplexed by it. All persons should be on their guard against its exercise. And we must, every one of us, resolve to spurn its influence, that we may avoid the depressing and almost ruinous effect which it has upon mind and character, when the encroachments of its tyrannizing control are experienced. As superiors, and as infe-

¹ διασείσητε.

riors; as men who exercise power,—or who are, in any way, dependent upon others,—we should remember that, whether we seek to make men fear us, or they seek to make us fear them, “The fear of man bringeth a snare; but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.”¹

This direction, with the others, likewise, that soldiers should not “accuse any falsely,” and that they should “be content with their wages,” shows that John was desirous that all who were ranked within this profession should lead honorable and useful lives. Language will not express the contempt in which the deceitful and self-seeking are held amongst true-hearted men. The Bible tells us in several places, that “a false balance is abomination to the Lord.”² It is so to man. Indeed there is hardly any form of sin which is so hateful as deceitfulness. It should be the part of the soldier to avoid it, and to expose it, that every instance of it in private may meet with just reprobation; and that every false call to arms may cause an indignant expression to go forth against the wrong feelings and motives by which it was dictated.

To “be content with their wages,” cannot imply that they should not ask for higher wages if they were poorly paid; but that they were to be satisfied with the support lawfully derived from their profes-

¹ Prov. xxix. 25.

² Prov. xi. 1. xx. 23.

sion, and not seek to increase their income by fraud and violence. To require the payment of what are called perquisites of office, or even to receive them when they are voluntarily offered, may sometimes be a violation of this precept. Customs which owe their origin to selfishness may be continued, without open censure, by persons who ought in fairness to do them away. This part of our text is in agreement with the rule given to the tax gatherers, “Exact no more than that which is appointed you.”¹ John may have designed here a suggestion to the government as well as instruction to the people. A sufficient remuneration should always be fixed upon for every public officer, that, whilst he gives himself exclusively to his duties, he may not be tempted, from want, to practice deceit or meanness.

We place our chief reliance upon CITIZEN SOLDIERS: men who have an interest in the soil upon which they tread; men who are connected, and associated, in every interest and endearment of life, with the citizens and rulers of our common country. This is more the case every day. An increasing advantage is consequently realized, in proportion to the extent to which the community at large is affected by the purest and best principles. As society, therefore, is characterized by an overreaching, grasping, deceitful, mean, and unrighteous spirit, so will it be

¹ Luke iii. 13.

with the men who represent society in the military forces which are called into service. The spirit of violence and unfairness must be overcome; and a contented, Christian disposition be habitually manifested in its place, *amongst all classes in the community*, and little, if any thing which is in opposition to the gospel of peace, will be seen in the conduct of our soldiers. For, says St. James, from whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts, that war in your members?"¹ "that is, do first, as it were, give battle to your rational powers, and then turn the several members of your bodies into weapons of mischief and destruction." Not the members of soldiers alone, but of those also by whose direction, or authority, they are sent forth; both and all partake of the common frailties of mankind.

Zealous efforts are made in our own and other Christian lands, in these days, to hasten forward the time when the Almighty will "make wars to cease unto the end of the earth: when He will break the bow, and cut the spear in sunder, and burn the chariot in the fire."² Bishop Horne, in remarking upon these words, exclaims, "Hasten, O Lord, that blessed day; but first prepare us for it." YES! YES! *We must be prepared for it!* These earnest exertions are used in consequence of the increase of "pure

¹ James iv. 1.

² Ps. xlv. 9.

and undefiled religion." Wherever Christ is preached, and his gospel is truly received, and truly followed, the strong-holds of sin in the heart are broken down, and the peaceful reign of Jesus is welcomed and delighted in. And how *can* men, who love God, because He first loved them; and who love all men, for the Redeemer's sake, who loved them, and gave himself for them:¹ HOW CAN THEY FAIL to approach nearer to the golden rules themselves, and become more and more desirous that, *all over the world*, there should be one feeling of common brotherhood; and that God should be able to look "down from heaven upon the children of men,"² and view them all as a people who had returned to the right way, doing unto others as they would that others should do unto them!³ Devoted advocates of peace should remember that, in connection with all the combined and leading efforts which they use to further their great and glorious purpose, the effect will be irresistible if, in all the relations of life, they individually "show themselves patterns of good works;"⁴ and scrupulously practice upon the apostle's injunction, "forbearing one another in love."⁵

Justice to those whom I address demands of me expressions of this sort. You do not bear arms because you are thirsting for warfare; and are desirous

¹ 1 John iv. 10, 11, 19.

² Ps. xiv. 2, 3.

³ Matt. vii. 12.

⁴ Titus ii. 7.

⁵ Eph. iv. 2.—Col. iii. 13.

to gain distinction in victorious engagements. You are not opposing a general inclination which prevails every where around you, for the quiet and peaceful adjustment of local and national differences: but the fact that so few people cultivate such a disposition, and so very many are regardless of the little causes from which the most serious difficulties too often originate, makes it *necessary* that we should have military men, and encourage a proper attention to military order and discipline.

Keep yourselves in readiness, my respected hearers, to answer the call of duty, as soldiers; but daily join your prayers with those of the ministers of religion; and unite your efforts also with the now increasing efforts of all Christian people, that the occasion for the exercise of your skill and courage may never again occur.

My heart has warmed towards you, honored men, and brethren, as I have prepared to address you on this anniversary-day. God grant that you may partake abundantly of the benefits which it is your part to aid, so greatly, with the divine blessing, to procure and continue to us all. May every temporal enjoyment be possessed by you, and by your families: and may our *religious liberty* be sensibly and gratefully rejoiced in, on your part: whilst each one of your number makes it his highest aim, to know

his own heart; fully to understand the nature of scriptural repentance; and to exercise lively faith in the Redeemer, whom John came to proclaim, and whom to know is life eternal.¹ The Holy Spirit, who descended in the form of a dove at the baptism of John,² and in cloven tongues on the day of Pentecost,³ is still on earth, to enlighten, instruct, and guide.⁴ By him the heart is changed, and the children of Adam made to experience the renewing of their nature,⁵ through the blood of the atonement.⁶ And it is he who "beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."⁷

It would be unfair to him, and discreditable to myself, to preach from any words of John without testifying to my hearers that I sought to partake of his spirit; and that it was my chief delight to aid in preparing my fellow-men for the second advent of the Redeemer; when he "shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels,"⁸ "to be the judge of quick and dead."⁹

Before Christ came, John taught the people—as in our text—to test their desire to participate in the benefits of his coming, by earnest endeavors to lead godly lives. And when the Saviour appeared, John immediately called upon all to look to Christ, and to trust in him, and to love him, as "the Lamb of

¹ John iii. 15.

⁴ John xvi. 13.

⁷ Rom. viii. 16.

² Matt. iii. 16.

⁵ Titus iii. 5.

⁸ Matt. xvi. 27.

³ Acts ii. 3.

⁶ 1 John i. 7.

⁹ Acts x. 42.

God which taketh away the sin of the world ; ”¹ and as such, Jesus was ever afterwards set forth ;² and as the ever living intercessor,³ through whom the obedience of our lives was to be made acceptable to God.⁴

As I look upon you, as you sit before me, clad in your martial attire, justly suited to excite the pride and gratitude of every worthy citizen ; and I realize that, as mortal men, you have, like all of us, to contend perpetually with spiritual foes, who unweariedly seek the destruction of our souls,⁵ my prayer ascends to heaven in your behalf that you may indeed be CHRISTIAN MEN, and “take unto you THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness ; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God : praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit.”⁶ AMEN.

¹ John i. 29, 36.

² Acts xiii. 38.

³ Heb. vii. 25.

⁴ Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

⁵ 1 Peter v. 8.

⁶ Eph. vi. 13.